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PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Christine Pointer – A Lesson in Overcoming

Christine Pointer is a dynamic talent, this year winning five gold medals at the National Veterans Creative Arts competition. From Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, Pointer is a 43-year-old Army veteran who receives care at the Miami VA Healthcare System and VA's Oakland Park outpatient clinic. During this year's stage show, she will perform "*All I Ask of You*," along with Air Force veteran James Sterrett-Bryant.

Pointer joined the Army in February 1982, after recruiters visited her high school. "I wanted to get away from home and see the world," she recalls. "My family struggled for so long and I didn't see a way out of the projects." Serving ten years in the Army, Pointer met her goal of seeing the world while stationed in Virginia, Germany, Texas and South Carolina. Her job in the military was serving as a supply sergeant and unit armorer.

For many, the Festival provides a means of healing, both in the physical and emotional sense. For a time, Pointer herself experienced anxiety, flashbacks and depression from some significant traumas she had experienced during military service. "I tried to handle the situation on my own but was unsuccessful," she remembers. "I was thrilled to learn much later about a program that could build self-esteem, confidence and promote healing—and that program was the Creative Arts Festival. Creative arts therapy has helped me deal with the emotions that occur with crisis. I had learned that healing is a process that takes time, sometimes even a lifetime."

Now, each time Pointer performs she overcomes. Her duet with fellow Festival performer James Sterrett-Bryant, will be a highlight of this year's stage performance. "*All I Ask of You*" is a familiar ballad from Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Phantom of the Opera*. "I think most people can relate to the piece because everyone wants to be loved by someone they can fully trust," Pointer says.

Although Pointer will sing at this year's event, she has also performed her dancing pieces at past Festivals, including one memorable piece where she took on the role of portraying the American flag. With her long elegant arms and memorable technique that takes you on her journey of emotions, Pointer takes command of an audience. "Dancing is another way that I communicate," she says. "I love the way dancing makes me feel, interpretive dance especially. I'm able to freely express those thoughts and words through body movement, enabling me tell a story and express many emotions."

When asked why she attends the Creative Arts Festival, Pointer says that she wants to be a source of inspiration for all those who have disabilities, either mental or physical, and traumatic life experiences. "Through performing, I've been afforded a platform to bring that awareness forward and serve as an example of overcoming," she says. Whether it is singing, dancing, writing monologues or maybe someday the visual arts, Christine Pointer is victorious every time she is under the spotlight and takes her bows center stage.